

old. In return, Ireland added immensely to the American national character. This month, when communities all across the Nation celebrate St. Patrick's Day, we honor the millions of Americans who trace their lineage to Ireland.

Our country has been blessed by the rich legacy of famous Americans whose ancestors emigrated to our shores from Ireland. Georgia O'Keefe, Edgar Allen Poe, and F. Scott Fitzgerald are just a few among the many whose talents have graced the arts. Andrew Mellon and Henry Ford excelled in business and finance. Will Rogers, Spencer Tracy, Bing Crosby, and John Wayne have entertained us. Pierce Butler signed the Constitution, General Douglas MacArthur led the Allied Forces in the Pacific during World War II, and Sandra Day O'Connor became the first woman to sit on our Supreme Court.

But let us not forget the sacrifices, dedication, and profound achievements of the thousands of less well-known Irish Americans who have labored to make the United States a country of which we all can be proud. They were—and continue to be—motivated by their deep commitment and fervent loyalty to family, friends, community, and country. This month we honor them and thank them for their efforts.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim March 1997 as Irish-American Heritage Month. I call upon all the people of the United States to observe this month with appropriate ceremonies, activities, and programs.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-seventh day of February, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-first.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

#### **Proclamation 6975 of March 3, 1997**

#### **Women's History Month, 1997**

*By the President of the United States of America*

##### *A Proclamation*

Throughout the history of our Nation, women have played a pivotal role in bringing about positive change to every aspect of American life, and their achievements continue to touch the lives of every single citizen. Women's History Month honors the women who made these accomplishments possible, securing their rightful place in history among those who have made our country great. This month, we celebrate these women's lives—and renew our commitment to breaking down the gender barriers that still exist.

Through their courage, foresight, and community spirit over the years, American women have created a world of opportunity for today's heroines and role models—women such as Secretary of State Madeleine Albright,

the highest ranking woman to serve in any presidential administration; Dr. Shannon W. Lucid, who has performed five historic and complex Space Shuttle missions during 18 years with NASA and recently broke the American and women's world record for continuous time in space; Oseola McCarty, who in 1995 donated the life savings she had earned as a maid to fund scholarships at the University of Mississippi; and Julie Su, the young attorney who first came to prominence through her efforts to expose illegal exploitation of Thai immigrants in a California sweatshop and who continues to help immigrants to secure proper medical care, employment, and the dignity they deserve. The pioneers in women's history would be proud of today's women pioneers.

As we approach the 21st century, we have reached another significant milestone in our Nation's history: Women have approached an almost equal share in the labor force. Thus, it is more important than ever that we enable women and men to meet their responsibilities at work and at home.

Women continue to break the glass ceiling, changing their status from employee to employer. Today, women-owned businesses are creating one out of every four jobs in the United States. From the classroom to the board room, women now occupy every part of the work force, building the kinds of lives for themselves and their families that are the heart of the American Dream.

Women's History Month provides Americans with an opportunity to celebrate the contributions of all the women who have enriched our Nation, to honor their legacy, and to reflect upon what we can all do to end discrimination against women. I encourage all Americans to learn from, and share information about, women's history in their workplaces, classrooms, and family rooms. As every family has its own heroes, so does our country. Only by studying the history of America's women can we fully understand the history of America.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim March 1997, as Women's History Month. I ask educators, Government officials, and all citizens to observe this month with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities, remembering not only this month but also every month the many different contributions that women make every day.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this third day of March, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-first.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

**Proclamation 6976 of March 3, 1997****Save Your Vision Week, 1997**

*By the President of the United States of America  
A Proclamation*

Our eyes are our windows to the world. They give us the freedom to gaze at a sunset, read a book, or drive a car. Our sight allows us to jog along a garden pathway or enjoy a panoramic view.

All of us need to care for our vision, but older Americans in particular should be aware of their susceptibility to eye disease. As the “baby boom” generation ages, it is critical that these Americans receive regular eye examinations from eye-care professionals.

A thorough exam can lead to early detection and control or cure of eye diseases such as glaucoma, cataract, and diabetic retinopathy. A professional eye exam can also diagnose age-related macular degeneration (AMD), a leading cause of severe visual impairment and blindness in the United States. This common disease affects the retina, the part of the eye that helps to produce sharp, central vision required for activities such as reading and driving. AMD causes a loss of this clear, central vision; in some cases, vision loss is rapid and dramatic. The risk of AMD dramatically increases after age 60. It is estimated that this disease already causes visual impairment in approximately 1.7 million of the 34 million Americans now older than 65. As these numbers continue to grow, researchers are working to find the cause of, and develop treatment for, this debilitating disease.

People with AMD and its accompanying visual impairment often cannot perform daily activities such as reading the newspaper, preparing meals, or recognizing faces of friends. The inability to see well affects routine activities and social interactions and can lead to a loss of independence.

However, low-vision services and devices can greatly improve the quality of life for visually impaired patients and help them maintain their independence. Devices such as hand-held magnifiers, computer monitors with large type, and large-print newspapers and books can help the visually impaired dramatically improve their quality of life.

To remind Americans of the importance of protecting their eyesight, the Congress, by joint resolution approved December 30, 1963 (77 Stat. 629; 36 U.S.C. 169a), has authorized and requested the President to proclaim the first week in March of each year as “Save Your Vision Week.”

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim March 2 through March 8, 1997, as Save Your Vision Week. Our eyes play a vital role in our independence and daily living and need to be examined regularly. Let us recognize the work done by vision researchers across our Nation on AMD and other eye diseases and the efforts they are making to enhance and retain our precious sight. Education on good vision starts with us, and we should take progressive steps to protect our eyes.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this third day of March, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-seven, and of